

CATFISH PROCESSING



ARKANSAS
AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS
SERVICE

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Catfish Processing Up 3 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during December 2003 totaled 48.5 million pounds round weight, up 3 percent from December 2002. The average price paid to producers was 62.9 cents per pound for December 2003, up 1.9 cents from last month and 8.5 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during December 2003 totaled 22.5 million pounds, down 2 percent from the comparable month in 2002. Total end of the month inventory increased 5 percent from last month and was up 11 percent from a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 8.54 million pounds, were up 3 percent from December 2002 and represented 38 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 13.9 million pounds, were down 5 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 62 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 16 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 61 percent, and the remaining 23 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The December 2003 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.07 per pound, an increase of 18 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.43 per pound, up 18 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 7 cents at \$2.54 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.10 per pound, down 1 cent from December 2002. Prices for frozen whole fish were up 6 cents at \$1.91, while frozen fillets at \$2.43 per pound were up 7 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless, catfish fillets for November 2003 totaled 331 thousand pounds, 62 percent below a year ago. Fifty-six percent of the imports were from Vietnam, 39 percent from China, with the remainder coming from Guyana.

Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for October 2003 totaled 173 thousand pounds, Ninety-four percent of which went to Kuwait and the remainder to Germany. Fresh fillet exports totaled 66.3 thousand pounds, all of which went to Kuwait.

Import and export data are compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Census.

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**Farm-Raised Catfish: Quantity Processed by Major Processors,
United States, 2002-2003**

Month	Round Weight Processed					Percent of Previous Year
	Monthly		Percent of Previous Year	Cumulative		
	2002	2003		2002	2003	
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>		<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	
Jan	52,551	55,523	106	52,551	55,523	106
Feb	52,856	55,461	105	105,407	110,984	105
Mar	58,340	65,007	111	163,747	175,991	107
Apr	50,694	57,105	113	214,441	233,096	109
May	52,902	58,424	110	267,343	291,520	109
Jun	49,450	52,441	106	316,793	343,961	109
Jul	52,363	54,089	103	369,156	398,050	108
Aug	54,383	54,153	100	423,539	452,203	107
Sep	53,366	51,885	97	476,905	504,088	106
Oct	56,576	57,652	102	533,481	561,740	105
Nov	50,072	51,246	102	583,553	612,986	105
Dec	47,048	48,518	103	630,601	661,504	105

**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors
and Imports, United States, 2002-2003**

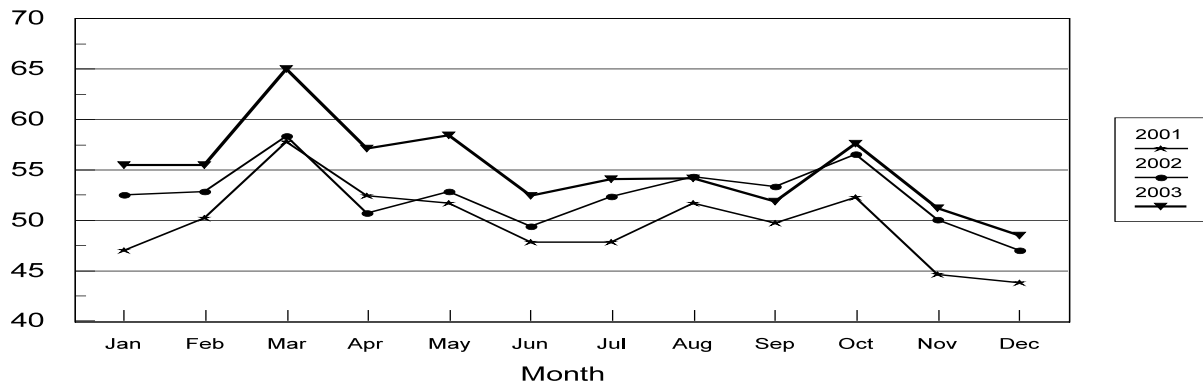
Month	Price per Pound ¹		Change from Previous Year	Imports ²		Percent of Previous Year
	2002	2003		2002	2003	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>		<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	
			<i>Dollars</i>			<i>Percent</i>
Jan	0.549	0.529	-0.020	1,037	1,322	127
Feb	0.555	0.544	-0.011	1,048	260	25
Mar	0.565	0.585	0.020	414	332	80
Apr	0.561	0.630	0.069	618	272	44
May	0.574	0.618	0.044	1,491	703	47
Jun	0.588	0.586	-0.002	982	893	91
Jul	0.590	0.564	-0.026	957	435	45
Aug	0.582	0.552	-0.030	632	135	21
Sep	0.576	0.560	-0.016	670	150	22
Oct	0.568	0.567	-0.001	572	384	67
Nov	0.560	0.610	0.050	874	331	38
Dec	0.544	0.629	0.085	906		

¹ Price for fish delivered to the processing plant door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling, but does not include adjustments based on year-end settlements.

² Pounds of frozen boneless fillets. Data furnished by U.S. Bureau of Census.

Catfish Processed United States 2001-2003

Million Pounds



Catfish Processors: Sales Volume, Average Price, and Ending Inventory, United States, December 2002-2003

Item	Sales Volume		Average Price		Ending Inventory	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	893	817	0.83	0.90	*	*
Whole Dressed	2,093	1,876	1.41	1.63	*	*
Total	2,986	2,693	1.25	1.43	152	111
Other						
Steaks	81	88	1.93	1.98	*	*
Nuggets	957	787	1.18	1.20	78	63
Other ¹	167	259	2.83	2.84	*	*
Total	1,205	1,134	1.46	1.64	88	89
Fillets ²	4,119	4,710	2.47	2.54	411	343
Total Fresh	8,310	8,537	1.89	2.07	651	543
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	967	958	1.85	1.91	1,015	1,178
Other						
Steaks	89	146	1.65	1.80	85	91
Nuggets	2,507	2,798	1.04	0.96	1,632	2,331
Other ¹	1,258	1,128	2.47	2.48	1,552	979
Total	3,854	4,072	1.52	1.41	3,269	3,401
Fillets ²	9,799	8,915	2.36	2.43	7,348	8,470
Total Frozen	14,620	13,945	2.11	2.10	11,632	13,049
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	893	817	0.83	0.90	*	*
Whole Dressed	3,060	2,834	1.55	1.72	*	*
Total	3,953	3,651	1.40	1.55	1,167	1,289
Other						
Steaks	170	234	1.78	1.87	*	*
Nuggets	3,464	3,585	1.08	1.01	1,710	2,394
Other ¹	1,425	1,387	2.51	2.55	*	*
Total	5,059	5,206	1.51	1.46	3,357	3,490
Fillets ²	13,918	13,625	2.39	2.47	7,759	8,813
Total Fresh & Frozen	22,930	22,482	2.03	2.09	12,283	13,592

* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

¹ Includes all products not already reported including weight of breading and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

Catfish Processing Estimates

Survey Procedures: Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 23 processors. All participating processors must meet the minimum criteria of having a capacity to process at least 2,000 pounds live weight of catfish per 8-hour shift. The survey is conducted entirely by NASS Headquarter's staff in Washington, D.C. NASS field offices, however, are responsible for keeping Headquarters informed of any new processing operations in their state to ensure that the survey coverage is as complete as possible. Processors are contacted either by mail or telephone. Diligent effort is made to ensure that all operations are accounted for in the estimate.

Estimation Procedures: The "**Catfish Processing**" report refers strictly to farm-raised fish and excludes wild capture fish. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared with the previous month's reports for comparable placement of data, reasonable price levels, and reasonable inventory carryover given the sales and processing totals reported. Estimates are made for those processors whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. These plants are identified by an asterisk on page 5 of this release. Estimates are normally based on the processor's previous report and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data. Price items are weighted by the associated volumes to compute weighted average prices. The published price for total whole fish, however, reflects an adjustment to the round and gutted only price to bring it to an equivalent dressed weight price.

If a plant uses a fiscal accounting system, proration is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis. Only national level estimates are published due to the limited number of plants involved. Generally, individual items are not published if there are less than three plants reporting, or if any one plant has 60 percent or more of the total.

One unique feature of the "**Catfish Processing**" report is the listing of cooperating processors by name on each month's release. This feature originally was used to solicit industry cooperation in maintaining coverage, but it has continued because of the processors' overall acceptance of this policy.

Import and export data for frozen catfish fillets, which are compiled by the Department of Commerce, are also included in this report.

Reliability: Catfish processing estimates are based on a census of all known active processors and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Revision Policy: Revisions may be necessary following a review of late reports received from plants. Revisions of less than 2 percent of the existing published levels of any category will normally not be made.